



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1376.0 - Local Government and ABS (Newsletter), Jun 2008

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 18/06/2008

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ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

'Local Government and ABS' is a newsletter published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to help the Local Government Sector use statistics to assist with planning and other community servicing decisions.

This is a free newsletter and we encourage you to forward it to others and post it on your bulletin board. Anyone is welcome to receive 'Local Government and ABS'. For further details on how to subscribe see ['Newsletter and ABS Contact Details'](#).

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HELP FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON THE ABS WEBSITE

Local Government users of the ABS website can now access information designed to help find data and other resources of interest to Local Government.

Called 'Services We Provide to Local Government' these new information pages include:

- How to find data for Local Government Areas;
- How to keep informed about ABS releases and developments; and
- Information about resources and services available to help you use data.

The pages include ABS releases that contain data at Local Government Area level, and information about ABS training available to Local Government clients.

Find these new pages by clicking on this link ['Services We Provide to Local Government'](#), or go to the ABS website <www.abs.gov.au> and on the Home Page, click on 'Services We Provide', then follow the link to 'Local Government'.

'Services We Provide to Local Government' is the latest in a series of help pages aimed at assisting ABS clients. Other 'Services We Provide' pages on the ABS website include: State/Territory Government, Small Business, and Universities.

NEW REGIONAL RELEASE: OWN UNINCORPORATED BUSINESS DATA

On 27 March 2008 a new series was introduced by the ABS Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre through the release of an [Information Paper: Persons with Main Source of Income from Own Unincorporated Business, Experimental Estimates for Small Areas, Australia, 1996-97 to 2003-04](#) (cat. no. 6225.0) and associated data cubes. Refer to [cat no. 6225.0.55.001](#) for the data cubes.

This Information paper presents experimental estimates by region of the number of persons whose main source of income comes from their own unincorporated business(es). Estimates of the aggregated individual income (or 'take home pay') these persons receive from their own unincorporated business(es) and the total income they receive from all sources are also available from this series.

The statistics compiled to date are for the financial years 1996-97 to 2003-04 and should provide further insight about economic and employment activity in regions. The data are available for various levels of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification such as Statistical Local Areas, Local Government Areas, Statistical Subdivisions and Statistical Divisions.

In 2003-04, persons whose main source of income was from own unincorporated business in the Local Government Area (LGA) of Mosman in Sydney had the highest average personal income from their own unincorporated business(es) of all LGAs in Australia at \$151,960. Woollahra also in Sydney, had the second highest average at \$134,843.

Mosman, Woollahra, the neighbouring inner Perth LGAs of Cottesloe (\$119,983) and Nedlands (\$117,654) and the Sydney district LGAs of Hunter's Hill (\$110,073) and Ku-ring-gai (\$101,110), were the only LGAs where average personal incomes of persons whose main source of income was from their own unincorporated business(es) were in excess of \$100,000 per annum in 2003-04.

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RELEASE OF SOCIAL ATLAS SERIES

Released on 17 March 2008, the [Social Atlas Series](#) complements the products that are made available on the ABS website by providing an at-a-glance view of the major characteristics of all Australian capital city areas. For the first time selected regional centres are also available, providing a visually informative alternative to traditional tables and statistical spreadsheets.

Areas in the Social Atlas Series include:

- Sydney, Newcastle & Central Coast and Wollongong
- Melbourne and Geelong
- Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast
- Adelaide and Mount Gambier
- Perth- Mandurah, Greater Bunbury and Kalgoorlie/Boulder
- Hobart, Greater Launceston and Burnie-Devonport
- Darwin and Palmerston, Alice Springs and Litchfield Shire
- Canberra-Queanbeyan

The maps highlight the diversity that exists across these cities and regional centres and are easy to interpret as the distribution of the data is represented by different colours and shading. Brief commentary explaining the main features and characteristics also accompany each map.

The Social Atlas features a new analysis of 2006 Census data, and presents easy to read thematic maps of capital cities, making data easier to interpret and providing the groundwork for a wide variety of stories on current and emerging issues. A wide range of topics is covered relating to: population, cultural diversity, work, housing, families, education and training and economic resources.

For more details and to download information free of charge, visit the ABS website on www.abs.gov.au and

look under product releases, or click onto the Social Atlas icon on the right of the page.

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RELEASE OF 2006 SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDEXES FOR AREAS (SEIFA)

On 26 March 2008, Information Paper: An Introduction to Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), 2006 (cat. no. 2039.0) was released.

SEIFA is a suite of four summary measures that have been created from 2006 Census information. The indexes can be used to explore different aspects of socio-economic conditions by geographic areas. For each index, every geographic area in Australia is given a SEIFA number which shows how disadvantaged that area is compared with other areas in Australia.

Each index summarises a different aspect of the socio-economic conditions of people living in an area. The indexes provide more general measures of socio-economic status than is given by measuring income or unemployment alone, for example.

The four indexes in SEIFA 2006 are:

- Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage: derived from Census variables related to disadvantage, such as low income, low educational attainment, unemployment, and dwellings without motor vehicles.
- Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage: a continuum of advantage (high values) to disadvantage (low values) which is derived from Census variables related to both advantage and disadvantage, like household with low income and people with a tertiary education.
- Index of Economic Resources: focuses on Census variables like the income, housing expenditure and assets of households.
- Index of Education and Occupation: includes Census variables relating to the educational and occupational characteristics of communities, like the proportion of people with a higher qualification or those employed in a skilled occupation.

SEIFA uses a broad definition of relative socio-economic disadvantage in terms people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society. While SEIFA represents an average of all people living in an area, SEIFA does not represent the individual situation of each person. Larger areas are more likely to have greater diversity of people and households.

This Information Paper accompanies the Datacubes and Technical Paper:

Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) - Data Only, 2006 (cat. no. 2033.0.55.001)

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) - Technical Paper, 2006 (cat. no. 2039.0.55.001)

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RELEASE OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

2005-06 Agricultural Census Releases

Final estimates from the 2005-06 Agricultural Census have been released. Products include:

- Agricultural Commodities, Australia, 2005-06 (cat. no. 7121.0); released on 4 March 2008. This publication contains final estimates from the agricultural census at state and national levels and for the Murray Darling Basin.
- Agricultural Commodities: Small Area Data, Australia, 2005-06 (cat. no. 7125.0); released on 7 March 2008. These spreadsheets contain all data collected in the agricultural census (excluding water) for state, Statistical Division and Natural Resource Management regions. Major data items for Statistical Local Area levels are also included.
- Water Use on Australian Farms, 2005-06 (cat. no. 4618.0); released on 13 March 2008. This

publication contains final estimates from the agricultural census on water used by Australian farms. Estimates for key pastures and crops irrigated at the national and state levels, and for the Murray Darling Basin are included. A summary of irrigation activity was published at the national, state, Statistical Division, Drainage Division and Natural Resource Management region levels. Sources of water for agricultural use have also been published nationally and by state. Additional information was released as datacubes in late March for key pastures and crops irrigated at the Drainage Division and NRM region levels. A summary of irrigation activity was also released at the Statistical Local Area, River Basin levels and Murray Darling Basin by state.

- Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, 2005-06 (cat. no. 7503.0); released on 8 May 08, which contains final value of production estimates at the state level.

2006-07 Agricultural Survey Releases

Publications from the 2006-07 Agricultural Survey include:

- Principal Agricultural Commodities, Australia, Preliminary, 2006-07 (cat. no. 7111.0); released on 20 December 2007. This first release from the agricultural survey for the year ending 30 June 2007 includes area and production for principal agricultural commodities, and livestock numbers, at the state level.
- Agricultural Commodities, 2006-07 (cat. no. 7121.0); released on 28 May 2008. This publication contains final estimates from the agricultural survey. It is supported by the release of spreadsheets in Agricultural Commodities: Small Area Data, Australia, 2006-07 (cat. no. 7125.0), released on 6 June 2008, which includes all data collected in the survey (excluding water) for state, Statistical Division and Natural Resource Management regions.
- Value of Principal Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia, Preliminary, 2006-07 (cat. no. 7501.0); released on 12 February 2008. It contains first estimates of the gross value of production of selected crops, livestock slaughterings and livestock products at the state level.
- Water use on Australian Farms 2006-07 (cat. no. 4618.0) will be released for National, state, Statistical Divisions and the Murray-Darling Basin by mid-August 2008.

Further information

For further information on these products, call the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070. For agriculture statistics contact Linda Falzari on (03) 6222 5943 or email agriculture.statistics@abs.gov.au, and for environment statistics contact David Rankin on (03) 6222 5961.

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FIRST RELEASE OF MESH BLOCKS DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

The publication Mesh Blocks Digital Boundaries, Australia, 2006 (cat. no. 1209.0.55.002) was released for the first time on 29 February 2008. This release contains digital boundaries for Mesh Blocks across Australia.

The ABS has developed Mesh Blocks as a new micro-level geographical unit for statistics. There are 314,369 spatial Mesh Blocks covering Australia with most residential Mesh Blocks containing approximately 30 to 60 dwellings. Mesh Blocks have been designed to be small enough to aggregate accurately to a wide range of spatial units and thus enable a ready comparison of statistics between geographical areas, and large enough to protect against accidental disclosure. Mesh Blocks are intended to become a new building block of statistical and administrative geography.

Experimental Mesh Blocks from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing are now available; the usual residence population and total dwellings are provided for each Mesh Block. The release of data for aggregations of Mesh Blocks is still under consideration by the Census Program, see www.abs.gov.au/census for more details on data availability.

The ABS is currently reviewing the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) with the

intention of simplifying and stabilising the classification. The proposed new Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) will be built up from Mesh Blocks and be composed of a hierarchy of geographical units that will fulfil all the functionality of the present ASGC. Mesh Blocks are the smallest geographical unit for which ABS data will now be output.

Details of the review and a proposal to replace the ASGC can be found in the Information Paper [Review of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, 2007](#) (cat. no. 1216.0.55.001).

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UPDATED REGIONAL WAGE AND SALARY EARNER STATISTICS NOW AVAILABLE

On 4 April 2008 updated regional Wage and Salary Earner statistics were released in [Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia, 2004-05](#) (cat. no. 5673.0.55.003).

This release contains data on the characteristics of Wage and Salary Earners (defined as persons aged 15 and over whose main source of income is from wages and salaries) in a series of data cubes. These data cubes contain various cross-tabulations of these data such as Wage and Salary Earners by age groups, sex, occupation, wage and salary income and total income. Most of the data within these data cubes are available for each Statistical Local Area across Australia.

In 2004-05 the Sydney Local Government Areas of Mosman, Hunter's Hill and Woollahra had the highest average incomes from wages and salaries at \$95,887, \$77,825 and \$77,141 respectively.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE?

Collections

The forms for our Local Government Finance Statistics, Quarterly Estimates for the June Quarter 2008 have been sent out to selected councils on 17 June 2008. Responses to the quarterly survey are required by 8 July 2008. A prompt response would be appreciated to ensure the financial activity of local government is accurately represented in Australia's Government Finance Statistics and National Accounts which are prepared on a quarterly basis. As always ABS personnel are available to assist councils in completing the form in situations where requirements are unclear.

Data from the annual 2006-07 Local Government Finance Collection were published on 15 April 2008 in the publication, [Government Finance Statistics, Australia](#) (cat. no. 5512.0). This publication contains consolidated financial statements for the Local Government sector in each state/territory, together with a dissection of expenses by purpose. This publication and related datacubes is available free of charge through the ABS website www.abs.gov.au.

The ABS thanks councils for their cooperation in providing high quality data for these collections. Information provided is used in making important policy decisions concerning the sector and it is important that accurate and timely information is returned by councils in building this data set.

Visits to Departments of Local Government and Grants Commissions

Each year the ABS endeavours to meet with each of the state/territory Grants Commissions or Departments of Local Government to review the recently completed annual collection and to commence preparations for the next cycle. These meetings are currently planned for June and July of this year.

A specific focus of discussion this year will be measures that can be taken to improve the consistency of local government data collections across jurisdictions. The final report of the Productivity Commission study into local government revenue raising capacity released on 17 April 2008 emphasised the need for the ABS and various grants commissions to improve the consistency of local government data collections.

Other Developments

Preparations are well advanced for the publishing of a Local Government Purpose Classification (LGPC), with an expected release date of late July 2008. The LGPC will form a key element in an ABS strategy to enable local government units to report on their activities on a basis that is both extremely relevant for them and standardised nationally.

Contact

For further information or inquiries about Local Government Statistics, contact the Local Government Statistical Unit on (07) 3222 6022.

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RECENT ABS RELEASES

Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2006-07 (cat. no. 3218.0)

Released on 31 March 2008, this publication contains estimates of the resident populations of Australia as at June 30 in each year from 2001 to 2007. Estimates highlight regional population growth or decline throughout Australia and are provided for Local Government Areas, Statistical Local Areas, Statistical Divisions, Statistical Subdivisions, Statistical Districts and states and territories of Australia, according to the 2007 edition of the Australian Standard Geographical Classification.

The estimates in this product are final for 2001, preliminary rebased for 2002 to 2006 based on results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, and preliminary for 2007.

Tasmanian State and Regional Indicators, Mar 2008 (cat. no. 1307.6)

This compendium publication was released on 30 April 2008, and presents a summary of both ABS and non-ABS statistical information about Tasmania. Topics covered include labour force, wages and prices, tourism, finance, state accounts, population, household and family characteristics, education, health and environment. Data are presented in summary commentary, tables, maps, graphs and excel spreadsheets at both state level and smaller areas, including Local Government Areas.

State and Regional Indicators, Victoria, Mar 2008 (cat. no. 1367.2)

This quarterly publication was last released on 15 May 2008, and contains recently released statistical information sourced from ABS and non-ABS collections about the whole of Victoria. Presented in an array of tables, charts and commentary, key economic, social and environmental data are available for varying geographic classifications, including Local Government Areas for some series. The publication allows comparison on core data series, such as Estimated Resident Population, Labour Force Statistics and Building Approvals, as well as a number of other series of interest, both over time and between regions.

Population, Australian States and Territories, Dec 2007 (cat. no. 3239.0.55.001)

This annual publication was released on 5 June 2008, and contains estimates of the total resident population of each state and territory as at 31 December 2006 and 2007, and components of population growth during calendar year 2007. This release also includes final population estimates for 30 June 2006 based on the 2006 Census of Population and Housing and a feature article; 'Final Rebasing And Revisions Of Australia's Population Estimates, September Quarter 2001 - June Quarter 2006'. These estimates, together with more detailed information are also published quarterly in Australian Demographic Statistics (cat no. 3101.0).

Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, Jun 2007 (cat. no. 3201.0)

Due for release on 27 June 2008, this annual publication contains population estimates for each state and

territory as at 30 June, classified by sex and single years of age (0 - 84), as well as age groupings, sex ratios, median and mean ages of the population.

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LINKS TO PREVIOUS ISSUES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ABS

[Local Government and ABS Issue 20 December 2007](#)

[Local Government and ABS Issue 19 September 2007](#)

[Local Government and ABS Issue 18 June 2007](#)

[Local Government and ABS Issue 17 March 2007](#)

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NEWSLETTER AND ABS CONTACT DETAILS

This newsletter is one way to help improve communication between the ABS and the Local Government Sector. New ABS initiatives to assist local government organisations will be announced in this newsletter as they evolve.

We would appreciate receiving your views and suggestions about this newsletter so that it remains useful and assists you to understand and use ABS statistics. We would also welcome suggestions for articles that you feel should be included. Please email your comments and suggestions to regional.statistics@abs.gov.au or telephone (08) 8237 7350.

For enquiries contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or e-mail: client.services@abs.gov.au.

How to subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter

Subscribe to our free email notification service on the ABS website to receive notifications of the release of the 'Local Government and ABS' newsletter.

By subscribing you can also choose to receive news about other ABS releases, or be advised when updates are available for the topics you are interested in.

This services also enables you to find out what you have subscribed to, and to cancel or modify your subscription.

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